

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please replace the Abstract of the Disclosure originally filed with the above-identified patent application with the following new Abstract of the Disclosure:

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A laser element driving apparatus includes a laser element that varies the light intensity corresponding to the current that flows thereto; a photodetection element that monitors and converts the light intensity of the laser element to electric signals; an emission control switch that controls the current that flows to the laser element; a feedback amplifier that controls the emission control switch by feeding back electric signals from the photodetection element; and an emission control switch controlling circuit that turns the emission control switch OFF when determining as abnormal a current flowing continuously to the laser element for a predetermined time from the beginning of the laser element light emission and/or that controls the emission control switch such that the current flowing to the laser element at the time of beginning of the laser element light emission is gradually increased. The laser element driving apparatus safely drives a laser element.